[For general information on the organizers and leaders of the various Paez fiesta (e.g., the fiesteros, albaceros and mayordomos) and their roles, see category 796.]

● 794
623

[Information on the Capitan and Síndico as representatives of the church in the council and community affairs will be found in category 624.]

/173 cont./

123 promise it. When I arrived in Calderas on Monday I found that
623 the men of the village had not wanted to meet a second time and
554 that they had indeed begun the work.

623 The alcaldes and the alguacil are the messengers of the
[203] cabildo; they notify the people when communal projects are
[696] necessary. Moreover, the alguacil administers corporal punish-
[203] ment. The three comisarios are likewise messengers and help
the gobernador carry out and supervise public projects. It is the
[794] duty of the fiscales -- together with the gobernador -- to deco-
rate the church. They provide candles and help the priest. Ac-
cording to C. Cuervo Marquez (Vol. II, p. 183), the fiscales
formerly also had the duty of defending the interests of the /174/
871 village against the encroachments of the colonists. The comisario
623 escolar, finally, is responsible for the school attendance of the
[797] children. The mission sisters, as the teachers, turn to him and
[875] he is supposed to get the children to school, by force, if necessary.

It should not remain unmentioned that Calderas -- and ap-
621 parently this village only -- is divided into four parts, each of
623 which occupies roughly a cardinal point and has about 50 houses.
[361] An alcalde, alguacil, fiscal, and comisario are each an equal
representative of a quarter in the cabildo. At present the alcalde
is the representative of the western region of Yocashí, the alguacil
the representative of the northern region of Puélche, the fiscal
that of the eastern region of Aépel, and the comisario that of the
southern Bishók. I was told that the connection between an office
and the representation of a village quarter is arbitrary, depending
on where the occupant of the post happens to live. The official
position within the cabildo is first assigned, and today it is the
more important. Four of them take over the representation of a
village quarter each. Thus, the comisario, if he lives there, may
be the representative from Yocashí, and the alcalde the repre-
sentative of Aépel. The present gobernador, for example, was
fiscal ten years ago. Since he lives in the village section of Puélche,
he was at the same time the representative of this quarter.

/208 cont./

796 through the village and meet in front of the festival house for a
[794] ceremonial salutation. They exchange brandy, chicha, and candles, each giving the other exactly the same thing /209/ that
[537] he himself receives. After they have mutually complimented each
[431] other sufficiently, they turn to the bystanders, make a short speech to the effect that everyone should enjoy himself, and dis-
796 tribute everything to the people standing around. Soon afterward
532 all gather on the plaza in front of the church, where now the "vacaloca" is lighted. This "crazy cow" consists of a number of flexible twigs bent into semicircles and held together on the underside by cross-rods; they are fastened one behind the other, which gives the structure the shape of a half-cylinder. This is covered with a cowhide and forms the body of the crazy cow. On one end is fastened a cow's skull modeled out of bast and newspaper to look as real as possible, and on the other end, a stick wound with agave fiber as a tail. A strong young man takes the frame of the cow on his shoulders and it is then lit at the specially prepared places on horns and tail. While music is played, the young man goes across the square in a zigzag, during which the young people try to tease the cow, while it, in turn, tries to get the bold ones on its horns. The meaning of this game is not clear to the Paez. It looks as though it were a poorly understood imitation of a popular bullfight.

796 Everybody now returns to the festival houses, where the musicians have taken their places on a bench on the narrow end of the festival house. The women squat in one corner in a large
[273] group with their children. And then begins the feast, at which everyone, men, women, and children, may eat and drink as much as he is able, with the exception of the fiesteros, who have the sole right to pour the chicha and brandy and do not themselves become intoxicated, in order to be able to carry out their duty well. The festival guests do not go home for the duration of the festival, but eat, drink, and sleep in the festival houses, stretched out full length on the floor wherever they happen to be. The festival goes on with more or less intensity -- as far as eating and drinking are concerned -- throughout the entire week; at any rate, no one works, but at most goes from house to house "pasnyándo."

/192 cont./

796 Then the new fiesteros look for assistants, called albaceros and mayordomos. At the close of the fiesta, accompanied by the cabildo and the old fiesteros, they go to the priest to be put on record and announced as the fiesteros for the following year. Each receives a church banner, and then in procession they walk round the church and proceed at once to one of the houses of the pueblo, previously requested from its owner, amidst the bursting of firecrackers and the strains of music.

[273] There, chicha and aguardiente will be served to the albacero, mayordomos, and the others present, even before they have finished drinking the liquor of the old fiestero. They will also be given a meal, for which a bull has been slaughtered.

● 794 The months go by. The need for money to cover the costs
796 is pressing. Fiesteros and albaceros, with their wives and sometimes also with a few friends, leave their land and, keeping to themselves, set out for Inzá, La Plata, or Popayán to sign up as laborers on haciendas which they know personally or through

[465] trustworthy references. Their daily pay will be one peso and food. Not even coca /193/ /illustration appears here/ is part of their ration. Husband and wife do the same work and earn the same pay.

After two months they return once more to their land, carrying in their pouches gunpowder, wicks and salt. Some-

[574] times, a machete fastened to the belt. The fiestero bears the brunt of the expense: camarico (1) /footnote 1 is missing; the camarico is the gift customarily given to a guest/ for the priest and the latter's fees; candles for the altar; gunpowder for the Mass and the social functions; the cleaning of the church; "care" for the albacero and hospitality to visitors for the period of three weeks. The albacero is in charge of the celebration of vespers: lights for the church, the vacaloca /"crazy cow," a feature of the fiesta/, fireworks, and gunpowder.

The mayordomos contribute money (one peso) for the priest's fees and candles to light the church.

/202 cont./
415 men first and then women, and ending with the children of both
554 sexes. No one is left without a share.
273

XII

The Cleaning of the Church

346 The so-called church of Calderas, a masonry structure, is a dilapidated old building, long and tall, with a two-slope thatched roof and a hemispherical bell tower supported by four beams set into the ridgepiece. Only the front of four columns with cornices and semicircular arches which form an antechamber lends the whole a certain charm.

346 What is called the cleaning of the church is the removal
794 of a few weeds that grow in the pavement in front of it and
796 clearing a line that encircles a small plaza. The task is minimal, but it is always performed. The act is symbolic more than anything else; what matters is the meeting of the fiesteros with their respective albaceros and laborers; an occasion for taking care of the albacero, an opportunity for merriment, talk, jokes, and even games.

Some 12 days before the fiesta and on a Thursday, accompanied by the cabildo, music, and firecrackers, the fiestero leaves his house and goes to occupy one in the pueblo. He takes /203/ along the bull that will be sacrificed on the following day. Two days later, that is to say, on Monday, the cleaning of the church is carried out. On rare occasions
[202] it is done on a Wednesday. The ringing of bells announces the invitation and later tells the people that the cleaning is over, whereupon they drink the two calabashes of chicha which each fiestero has brought; the firecrackers are set off; "the albacero has earned a meal," they say, and deserves the honors of the table. The fiestero will take care of him with

/203 cont./

346 meat and "mute," as well as more chicha and aguardiente.
794 After lunch the albacero goes home. There he waits for the
796 fiestero, who in the afternoon will bring him more chicha, more aguardiente, and more food.

796 A week after the cleaning of the church, the priest will
793 come to officiate at the religious ceremonies.

XIII

Instruments, Music and Dance

533 The musical groups of the Calderas people, true chirimías /a kind of orchestra/, are deservedly famous both for the number of the musicians and for the beauty of their interpretations. Many are soft and delicate, most of them sad tunes,
534 but there are joyous ones as well. The musical instruments are few.

The flute (kuvi), made of a reed some 70 centimeters long; it has seven holes made by burning: the one in the upper part which serves for blowing, and 35 centimeters farther down are found the others, which correspond to the fingers of the hands, at intervals of three centimeters apart. They distinguish two types of flutes: those that produce melodic sounds, kuvinéhuish (major flute) and those that produce low tones, kuvinuch (minor flute).

[281] The bass drum (kut), made with the skin from sheep, calf, goat, or deer, the hair of which has been removed by fermentation underground.

The tambourine, around the edge of which is put several pairs of movable circular pieces of tin which produce a rhythmic sound.

The side drum or snare drum and the triangle to mark the rhythm.

/336 cont./

423 623 428 no rights over land won by the sweat of the brow. It is inherited directly by the sons. In such cases the cabildo confirms ownership by issuing the respective adjudication.

423 578 When the colonization has been done by several persons, usually brothers, and the division of the land does not satisfy one of the parties, famous litigations take place that eat up the small savings of the families. The feeling for ownership of land is highly developed among the natives, and the usurpation of the slightest piece of ground gives rise to quarrels, enmities, and litigations. The sale of land to "whites" is prohibited by Colombian law and by the consuetudinary law of the natives. But among the natives themselves transactions can be made with immovables. They do not sell the land, but the ownership. The owner of land is the man. A widow, too, can be an owner by inheritance from the husband. Single women do not own land.

42 [648]

422 [428] The bovine, equine, porcine, and wool-bearing livestock belong to the man, although a few women own pigs and sheep. Turkeys, chickens, cats, and guinea pigs belong to the women, and so do dishes, spoons, pots, grinding stones, calabashes, and bags. These are inherited through the female line. Children are owners merely of their own clothes.

423 [794] Concerning communal property, we have already seen that in each parcialidad there are several hectares of land that belong to all the members of the parcialidad. Also regarded as communal property are public works, such as roads, bridges, the main ditches, the house of the cabildo, and the church, and they collectively maintain them; likewise regarded as the property of the parcialidad are the sums of money collected for the church, the produce of the clearing of the saint, and any livestock or mills that it might own.

428 [842] Concerning inheritance, let us look first at the concepts expressed by an informant from Calderas. Asked about the ideal number of children for native families, he replied that everyone wished to have many children. "When one dies and one has land, who can handle it? The ancestors worked the montaña, and this is why we have land. We are five brothers and we work